

Time Colonies, Inc.

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A scientific discovery, a liquid formula, wherein the very essence of a person's relationship to time is identified and isolated, enables time travel, but only when a person sacrifices a year for every year they go backward, or forward, a minute for a minute, ten years of aging for a trip ten years into the past.

This science is eventually harnessed in a ruthless and systematic way by Nucleus Pharmaceuticals, the company that employs the scientist who discovered the formula. The company soon changes its name to Time Colonies, Inc.

People Third World countries are secretly made slaves and sent into special colonies, forced to age as they travel back in time, forced to build other special colonies. No one person can travel back five hundred years, just as no one person can age five hundred years - and so each slave is only sent back a small number of years, usually. The scientist who created the formula tries to go back to the time when the company was first beginning, but it leaves him a feeble, ninety-year old man trying to physically overpower a young man, the founder of Nucleus Pharmaceuticals, who has no scruples about killing this apparently unprovoked attacker.

Some slaves are made to return to the present, or towards the present, to report on the progress of their time colony, in terror of the consequences of being caught in a lie, monitored by their fellow slaves, who are also made to feel the same terror. Those who go back in time are forced, through fear, to build larger colonies of slaves, so that there are more young to send further back. These young, in turn, in fear, build colonies of young people further in the past, and so on, until there is a network stretching back hundreds and hundreds of years, all with their eyes on each other, all receiving their orders through the network from those in the present at Time Colonies, Inc. In the present, Time Colonies, Inc. is in a perpetual struggle against the governments of various nations, all aware that Time Colonies, Inc. is involved in some secret project that threatens their government's ability to stay in power. Yet they are already relatively helpless against the power that Time Colonies, Inc. wields. Time Colonies, Inc. is perpetually mapping out what must be done in the past in order to further empower them. The very transparency of their company name testifies to the degree of their unchecked power.

Until finally a slave, TXCA, a young boy, escapes, bringing with him in his escape a large, stolen quantity of the liquid formula. Helping him escape is a very, very old man who had pieced together more of the real set-up than most. The old man, while facilitating the escape, whispered to the boy something that sounded very cryptic, yet TXCA believes the old man just the same - for this old man proves to have been his best friend, NYNJ, who was the same age as he, just weeks before.

NYNJ had initially set out to go back in time to prevent the moment when he was first being sold into slavery. This led to a chase through time, during which NYNJ learned various things about history and Time Colonies, Inc. However, it seriously aged NYNJ, until he is at death's door by the time of TXCA's escape. The cryptic words NYNJ speaks to TXCA have to do with an assassination three hundred years in the past, an assassination that must be stopped. Jacob is the name of the man who must be saved, and TXCA should expect to learn more of this from others, who will come from many points in time to help him.

As TXCA works to blend in with the world into which he has escaped, he notices an inordinate number of very old men and women eyeing him. For unbeknownst to TXCA, his future actions are already legend, and people willing to use up great numbers of their years have made their way to where they understand him to be historically. This vast assortment of old people gradually recognizes each other as comrades in this fight, and they work together to lay out the path for TXCA to follow.

Eventually a channel of communication opens between Jacob and TXCA, at great cost to the ages of a small number of people, until a system is developed by which only a small amount of years is taken from each of a large number of people. TXCA has to find out the circumstances of Jacob's death, not just the precise circumstances, but how to stop those who instigated it from finding an alternate means if they should fail.

Every day a premise of TXCA's reality has altered imperceptibly, the result of things changing in his past. Every day he can only wonder about what he now takes for granted that he did not the day before, for often the premise of reality merges within him even as it changes. Sometimes a clue to something basic surfaces, planted days, weeks or years before by those who know that, in a world where a turbulently changing past is like a perpetual movement in the ground beneath one's feet, one can only be steered by subtle means. In this way TXCA somehow manages to stay one step ahead of Time Colonies, Inc.

The End